PUBLIC HEALTH
Practice-Based Research Networks

Introducing the inaugural issue of the

PBRN Week in Review | January 23, 2009

PBRN Grantees*: Please circulate relevant information to your network members.* For additional information and suggestions for future items, please contact Sharla Smith, smithsharlaa@uams.edu or 501-526-6629.

Notable Accomplishments this Week

▪ The PBRN Coordinating Center hosted a kick-off conference call for PBRN grantees on January 21, 2008. Participants discussed overarching objectives for the initiative, and summarized planned activities for each of the individual PBRN projects.

▪ This kick-off call was the first in what will be a monthly conference call of PBRN project directors and project managers scheduled for the second Tuesday of each month 11:30am Eastern (10:30 Central, 9:30 Mountain, 8:30 Pacific).

Ongoing PBRN Activities

The initial group of five Public Health PBRN grantees are using this first full month of project operations to establish organization and communication structures for their networks and develop their initial work plans. Key activities that PBRNs will want to initiate early on include:

▪ Convening initial meeting(s) of the PBRN steering committee to develop work processes, communication channels, meeting schedules, and initial timelines.

▪ Initiating a process to identify and/or further specify the research interests held in common by network participants and the practice issues or problems faced by participants that could be informed through practice-based studies.

▪ Initiating a process to identify key research resources and assets that are available and accessible to PBRN participants. These resources include data sources that are maintained by or accessible to network participants and that could be used for studies of interest in public health practice, such as: surveillance systems and registries, program administrative data and records, and financial and/or personnel reporting systems. These research resources may also include technical expertise that could be tapped by the network for designing and conducting practice-based studies (e.g. staff with expertise in database design, programming, survey design, data analysis, etc).

- Identifying and further specifying the most compelling research opportunities that are emerging within your network of PBRN participants. Opportunities for gaining new knowledge through comparison and evaluation are frequent but sometimes fleeting. Are new innovations in practice occurring, or are differences in practice emerging that need to be explored for their effects? Are important policy changes or administrative changes on the horizon that need to be evaluated for their implementation and impact? What would need to be accomplished in order to take advantage of these opportunities for practice-based research?

Activities on the Horizon

- During early February, the PBRN Coordinating Center will be sending out a brief electronic survey instrument to solicit information on your PBRN's near-term technical assistance needs and assets. What activities do you need help with? What kinds of expertise would be useful for your network to tap over the coming six months? What kinds of expertise does your PBRN network possess that could be shared with other PBRN grantees? Results will be used to craft a customized technical assistance plan for each PBRN grantee.

- In the coming weeks, we will be working to expand content and functionality of the Public Health PBRN website, which is located on www.publichealthsystems.org A web-based discussion board and a password-protected page to share PBRN project documents will be included. Ideas on how to make this resource most useful are welcome!

Opportunities for Presenting/Publishing Your Work

- The PBRN Coordinating Center will be organizing a panel session on public health PBRNs at the 2nd Annual *Keeneland Conference on Public Health Systems Research,* to be held April 7-9 in Lexington, KY. We would like to include a speaker from each of the five funded PBRNs to discuss their project's interests, activities, and early experiences. More to come on this opportunity.

- Proposals for learning sessions at the *National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) Annual Meeting* are being solicited through **Monday January 26, 2009**. The PBRN Coordinating Center would be pleased to submit a proposal on behalf of the PBRN grantees if there is interest in presenting at this meeting. Please call or email Sharla Smith with your interest at smithsharlaa@uams.edu or 501-526-6629.

- Abstracts for the American Public Health Association Annual Meeting are due February 9-13. We will be soliciting interest in a panel presentation at this meeting as well. Again please call or email Sharla Smith with your interest at smithsharlaa@uams.edu or 501-526-6629.

Key Upcoming Dates

January 26 – Deadline for abstract/proposal submissions for presentation at the NACCHO Annual Meeting.
http://www.naccho.org/events/nacchoannual2009/proposals.cfm

February 9-13 – Deadline for abstract submissions for APHA Annual Meeting

February 10, 9:30-10:30am EST – monthly conference call with PBRN project directors and project managers.

February 13, 10am PST – Panel session on public health systems research at *Preventive Medicine 2009 Meeting*, Los Angeles CA. Speakers include PBRN Advisory Group member Dr. Michael Caldwell along with Dr. Hugh Tilson and Glen Mays.

February 16 – Deadline for abstract submissions for presentation at the *AcademyHealth Public Health Systems Research Interest Group Meeting*.
http://www.academyhealth.org/interestgroups/phsr/callforpapers.htm

February 19, 9:30-11:00am EST – *PBRN Webinar on Public Health Systems Research.* Glen Mays, Doug Scutchfield, and Tim Van Wave will give a brief overview of PHSR, what we've learned to date, common methods and approaches, and new directions. This webinar is designed for all PBRN investigators, staff, and interested network partners. Connection information will be sent via separate email.

March 13 - Deadline for registration for the *Keeneland Conference on Public Health Systems Research*. www.publichealthsystems.org/media/file/2009KCRegistrationFormPDF.pdf

Funding Opportunities for Public Health Systems Research

- RWJF is developing a new program focus area on public health law that is likely to open new opportunities for research on the design, implementation, and impact of public health law and policy. We will keep you apprised of funding opportunities.

- RWJF has a newly active program to support research that evaluates the use and impact of quality improvement techniques in public health practice. The deadline for the first round of funding closed in December 2008 but we will keep you apprised of subsequent funding opportunities.
- http://www.rwjf.org/applications/solicited/cfp.jsp?ID=20581

- A new program announcement from the National Institutes of Health looks particularly well suited for practice-based research in public health. *Using Systems Science Methodologies to Protect and Improve Population Health (R21)*. This FOA

solicits Exploratory/Developmental (R21) applications from institutions/organizations that propose to apply one or more specific system science methodologies to "policy resistant" public health problems and contribute knowledge that will enhance effective decision making around the development of and prioritization of policies, interventions, and programs to improve population health in the U.S. and abroad, especially where resources are limited and only a limited number of programs/policies/interventions can be implemented. Standard NIH submission deadlines apply. http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PAR-08-224.html

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